MYSTIC
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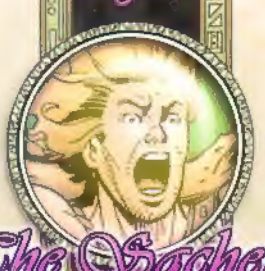
Matt Ryan
Wil Quintana
CGE
32
FEB
$2.95
$4.75 CAN
www.crossgen.com
Lopresti
Ryan
WIL

Giselle

never wanted ultimate power, but fate had other plans for her. Born on a world ruled by seven magical guilds, Giselle Villard disdained the mystic arts. She partied night after night while her elder sister, Genevieve, rose through the ranks of the powerful Nouveau Guild.

Then came the ceremony where Genevieve was to inherit her guild's Eternal Spirit - the ghost of a previous master possessing the arcane wisdom of the ages. In the audience, a mysterious stranger branded a mark of power onto Giselle's right palm. This red and yellow Sigil forced the eternal spirits out of all seven Guild Masters and bound them to Giselle. Granted vast magical might, Giselle reluctantly became the most powerful Mystic ever known.

Recently, Giselle was banished by a mysterious new enemy to a prehistoric world without magic. There she met a local warlord, the Sachem of Vardan Ree, who may be her only ally in this jungle realm. Meanwhile, on the Spirit Plane, the Dark Magi Spirit and the Nouveau Spirit argue over why they are unable to contact Giselle...



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CGE™

WHAT DID YOU DO TO HER, LeCAVALIER?!
WHERE IS GISELLE?!

MAGUS, NO!
=HAKK= =SPUTT=
DON'T YOU SEE? THE NOUVEAU SPIRIT HAS PLAYED US ALL FOR FOOLS!
FIRST HE SEDUCED US, ONE BY ONE, TO HER SIDE. HE ACTUALLY CONVINCED SOME OF YOU THAT THE GIRL WAS WORTHY OF OUR COUNSEL!
BUT NOW THAT SHE HAS FAILED TO WIN OVER THE TANTRICS, HE'S GONE TO HIS BACKUP PLAN!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT...?
THINK ABOUT IT! WHY ELSE ARE WE SUDDENLY UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH GISELLE--OR EVEN SENSE HER PRESENCE AT ALL?!
IN FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF THIS GHOSTLY EXISTENCE, HAS ANY ONE OF YOU EVER LOST CONTACT WITH A BODY YOU INHABITED?

NO...CAN'T SAY THAT I HAVE...
OF COURSE YOU HAVEN'T!
WHEN WE FIRST ARRANGED THIS SYMBIOSIS WITH OUR SUCCESSORS, WE CAREFULLY AVOIDED THE POSSIBILITY OF THIS EVER HAPPENING!
WE MAY EXIST HERE ON THE SPIRIT PLANE, BUT OUR CONNECTION TO THE PHYSICAL WORLD -- TO THE MIND OF THE LIVING BEING HOSTING US-- HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNBREAKABLE.
IF OUR LINK TO GISELLE HAS BEEN SEVERED, IT IS NO COINCIDENCE, NO NATURAL OCCURENCE. EITHER HE CUT US OFF DELIBERATELY, OR GISELLE VILLARD IS DEAD!
BUT...IF SHE WERE DEAD, WOULDN'T WE RETURN TO THE MASTERS OF OUR OWN GUILDS?
WHO KNOWS? THAT DAMNABLE SIGIL ON HER PALM WAS WHAT TRAPPED US WITHIN HER IN THE FIRST PLACE. COULD ITS HOLD PERSIST BEYOND DEATH?
OR PERHAPS SHE LIES SOMEWHERE IN A TRANCE...

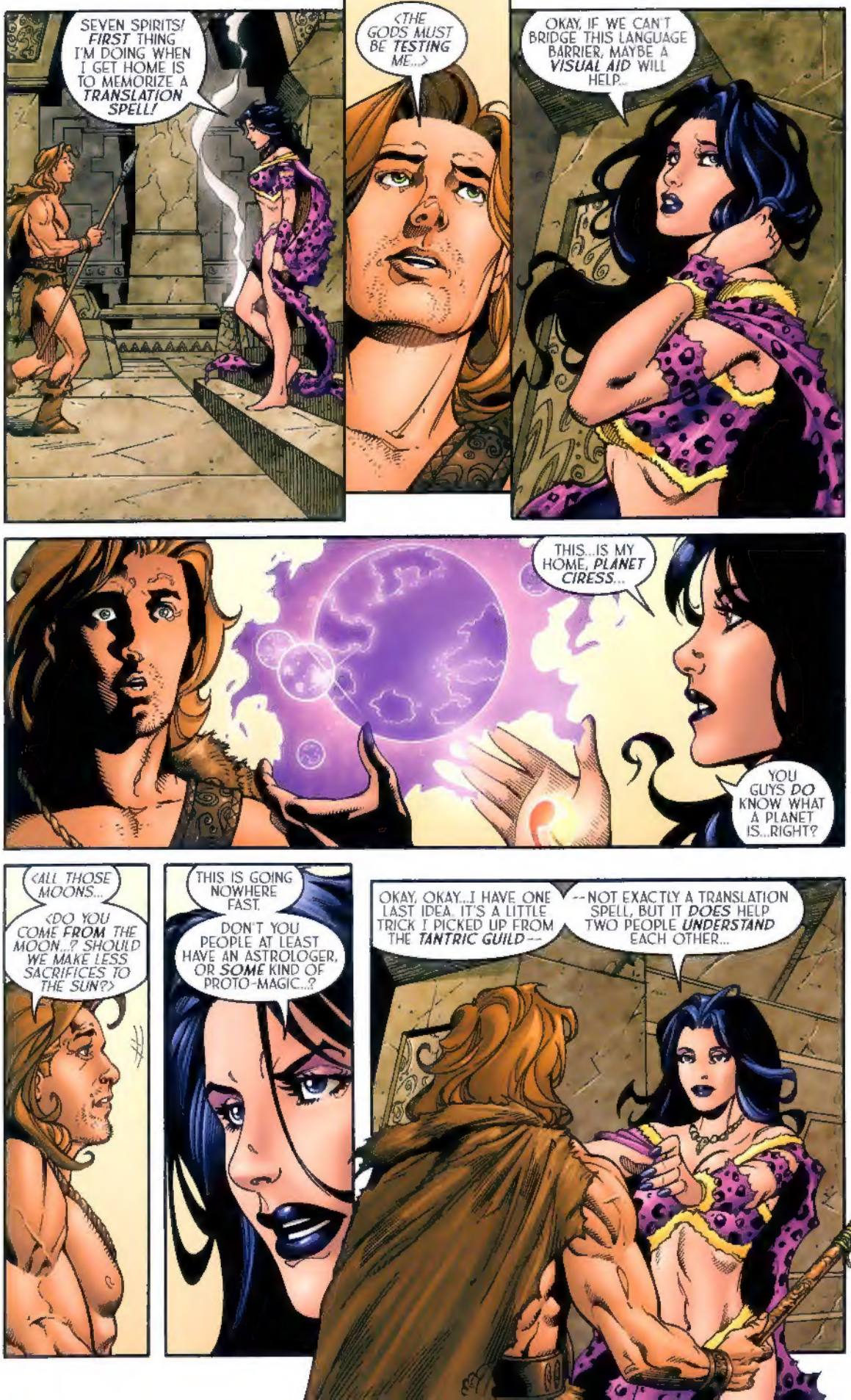
"...PERHAPS SHE IS **HERSELF** TRAPPED IN A NIGHTMARE FROM WHICH SHE CANNOT AWAKEN."

Um... YOU ALL CAN **STOP** DOING THAT ANY TIME NOW...!

OKAY, SO YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE WORK **MAGIC** BEFORE. BIG DEAL.

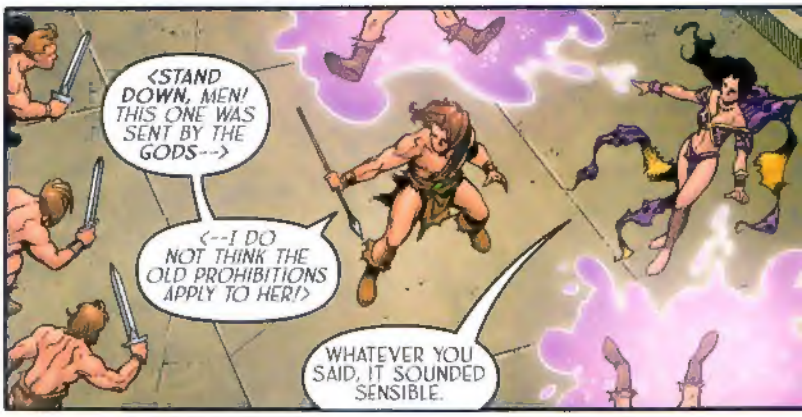
WHERE I COME FROM, ANYONE AND **EVERYONE** KNOWS AT LEAST **SOME** MAGIC. IT'S REALLY **NOT** THAT SPECIAL.

<PLEASE, GREAT ONE, I DO NOT UNDERSTAND...>


SEVEN SPIRITS! FIRST THING I'M DOING WHEN I GET HOME IS TO MEMORIZE A TRANSLATION SPELL!
<THE GODS MUST BE TESTING ME...>
OKAY, IF WE CAN'T BRIDGE THIS LANGUAGE BARRIER, MAYBE A VISUAL AID WILL HELP...
THIS...IS MY HOME, PLANET CIRESS...
YOU GUYS DO KNOW WHAT A PLANET IS...RIGHT?
<ALL THOSE MOONS...
<DO YOU COME FROM THE MOON...? SHOULD WE MAKE LESS SACRIFICES TO THE SUN?>
THIS IS GOING NOWHERE FAST.
DON'T YOU PEOPLE AT LEAST HAVE AN ASTROLOGER, OR SOME KIND OF PROTO-MAGIC...?
OKAY, OKAY...I HAVE ONE LAST IDEA. IT'S A LITTLE TRICK I PICKED UP FROM THE TANTRIC GUILD--
--NOT EXACTLY A TRANSLATION SPELL, BUT IT DOES HELP TWO PEOPLE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER...

<NO! THE SACHEM MUST NOT KNOW THE TOUCH OF A WOMAN!>
HEY!

COME ON, GUYS! DON'T MAKE THIS ANY HARDER!


<STAND DOWN, MEN! THIS ONE WAS SENT BY THE GODS-->
<--I DO NOT THINK THE OLD PROHIBITIONS APPLY TO HER!>
WHATEVER YOU SAID, IT SOUNDED SENSIBLE.

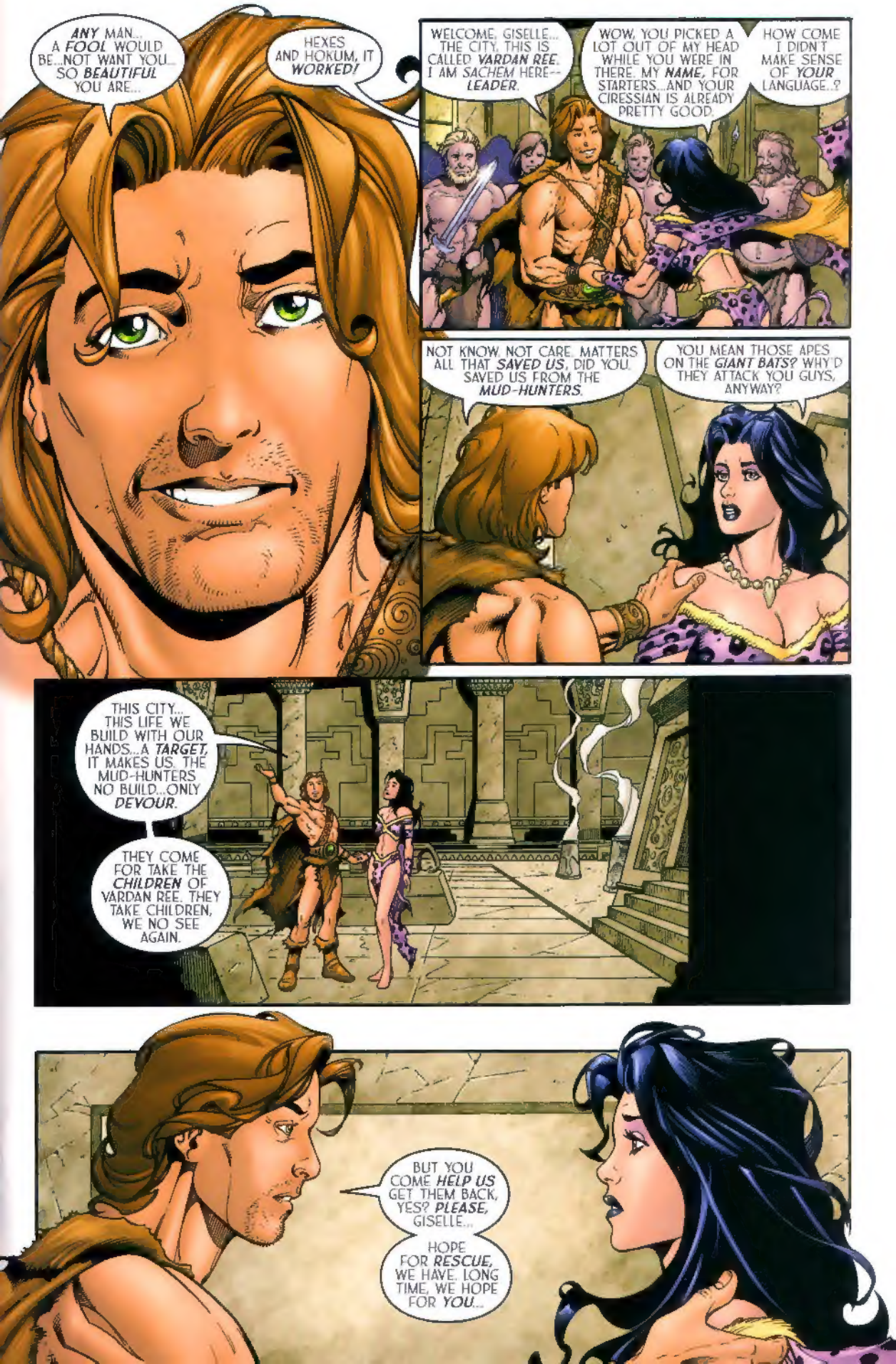
HOPEFULLY, MISSUS JUNGLE-KING WON'T MIND THIS.
ASSUMING THERE IS A MISSUS JUNGLE-KING...

OKAY...WE'RE GONNA SHARE THOUGHTS AND PERCEPTIONS FOR A MOMENT. YOU'LL SEE YOURSELF THROUGH MY EYES, I'LL GET YOUR TAKE ON ME--THAT KIND OF THING.
IT'S A LITTLE MIND-BLOWING, SO BRACE YOURSELF...

=GASP=

...hUnh...

"SACHEM." THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL YOU, RIGHT?
WOW, YOUR THOUGHTS... AND EMOTIONS WERE SO... PRIMAL...
...AND YOU, uh...YOU KINDA LIKE ME A LITTLE, DON'T YOU...?


ANY MAN... A FOOL WOULD BE...NOT WANT YOU... SO BEAUTIFUL YOU ARE...
HEXES AND HOKUM, IT WORKED!
WELCOME, GISELLE... THE CITY, THIS IS CALLED VARDAN REE. I AM SACHEM HERE--LEADER.
WOW, YOU PICKED A LOT OUT OF MY HEAD WHILE YOU WERE IN THERE. MY NAME, FOR STARTERS...AND YOUR CIRESSIAN IS ALREADY PRETTY GOOD.
HOW COME I DIDN'T MAKE SENSE OF YOUR LANGUAGE...?
NOT KNOW, NOT CARE. MATTERS ALL THAT SAVED US, DID YOU. SAVED US FROM THE MUD-HUNTERS.
YOU MEAN THOSE APES ON THE GIANT BATS? WHY'D THEY ATTACK YOU GUYS, ANYWAY?
THIS CITY... THIS LIFE WE BUILD WITH OUR HANDS...A TARGET, IT MAKES US. THE MUD-HUNTERS NO BUILD...ONLY DEVOUR.
THEY COME FOR TAKE THE CHILDREN OF VARDAN REE. THEY TAKE CHILDREN, WE NO SEE AGAIN.
BUT YOU COME HELP US GET THEM BACK, YES? PLEASE, GISELLE...
HOPE FOR RESCUE, WE HAVE. LONG TIME, WE HOPE FOR YOU...

STOP LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT!
YOU CAN'T TELL ME ANY OF YOU WOULD TAKE HIS WORD OVER MINE--!
NEVER MIND IF IT WAS THE MAGUS WHO SAID IT, THE LOGIC OF HIS ARGUMENT IS COMPELLING
YOUR NOUVEAU GUILD HAS PROSPERED UNDER THIS NEW ARRANGEMENT, WHILE OURS HAVE FOUGHT TO SURVIVE
YOU ARE AN ACCOMPLISHED TACTICIAN, LeCAVALIER IF YOU DID ENGINEER OUR BONDAGE TO GISELLE FROM THE START, IT WOULD BE YOUR GREATEST COUP EVER
I WOULDN'T KNOW WHETHER TO KILL YOU OR CONGRATULATE YOU
THE MAGUS WOULD FIND THAT CHOICE A SIMPLE ONE. COUNT YOURSELF FORTUNATE I CONVINCED HIM TO LEAVE UNTIL HE CALMS DOWN
ARE YOU SO SURE THAT HIS DEPARTURE WAS YOUR IDEA? HE'S BEEN VERY HEARTFELT, VERY EARNEST IN HIS ACCUSATIONS AGAINST ME TODAY
SINCE WHEN WAS THE MAGUS KNOWN FOR BEING EARNEST?

HERE IT IS AS PROMISED
YOUR INHERITOR AWAITS YOU IN HIS SANCTUM
YES I'M SURE HE DOES.
I LOOK FORWARD TO LEARNING MORE ABOUT HIS NEW ALLIES WH--
MAGUS! WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?
I.
I WOULD INTRODUCE YOU, BUT NAMES ARE POWER, AFTER ALL
SUFFICE TO SAY HE HAS BEEN MY CONDUIT TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING FOR SOME TIME NOW
YOU'VE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH CIRESS AND YOU NEVER TOLD US?!
SO SORRY I SUPPOSE I WAS A BIT PREOCCUPIED--
-JAMMING OUR MIND-LINK WITH GISELLE

YOU WHAT?!

WE'LL DESTROY YOU FOR THIS!

WHERE IS SHE MAGUS? WHERE'S GISELLE?!

THAT'S THE **BEST** PART. SHE'S ON A NETHER-PLANE OF CIRESS -- A VERDANT DIMENSION THAT HAS BEEN **SEALED OFF** FROM THE UNIVERSAL ENERGIES

ONCE HER PERSONAL STORES ARE EXHAUSTED, SHE'LL BE QUITE POWERLESS

IMAGINE IT- A LAND WITHOUT MAGIC. THE MIND BOGGLES AT THE CONCEPT.. !

YOUR **GLOATING** WILL BE YOUR **UNDOING!**

ONE THING I WON'T MISS ABOUT THIS PLACE IS THE **STINK** OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR STAY
VIP
HE'S
HE'S FREE MAY THE FATES HAVE MERCY ON CIRESS SHOULD HE REUNITE WITH THE DARK MAGI MASTER
WHY IS IT WE STILL CANNOT SENSE GISELLE ?

SO IF THEY STEAL YOUR KIDS, WHY EXACTLY HAVEN'T YOU GONE AFTER THEM BEFORE?
I MEAN, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE ENOUGH MUSCLE
THE MUD HUNTERS HAVE SURPRISES
DO NOT THINK THEM WEAK WE SEND RAIDERS BEFORE NONE RETURN
NOW, HAVE WE SURPRISE FOR THEM NOW, HAVE WE HOPE
NOW, HAVE WE YOU
=giggle= SAY THE SWEETEST THINGS YOU DO

OOOL?!
NYA OOOL ?
COLDA BOBO! AGOONDA OOOL
HROONK!
NEEE!
MACHA! MACHA!

I'LL HANDLE THE WARRIORS! YOU JUST MAKE SURE YOUR KIDS ARE SAFE!
<FORWARD! THE GODDESS PROMISES VICTORY!>
ATOOK! COUDA ATOOK!

NE-AH ATOOK!
HARAKA! HARAKA!
ZUG ZUG--!
KZIKK
<NOW! FINISH THEM OFF!>
KZAKK

(END THIS SCOURGE ONCE AND FOR ALL!)
(EXECUTE THEM!)
YAAAHH!
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE
STOP! ISN'T IT ENOUGH THAT THEY'RE INCAPACITATED?
TAKE OUR CHILDREN, THEY HAVE! NEVER AGAIN!
SFX
Ah--!

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?! THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A RESCUE, NOT A MASSACRE!
MUD-HUNTERS, THEY ARE! LESS THAN US THEY ARE! LESS THAN PERSONS!
'LESS THAN PERSONS'?
I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT
ATOOK NYA POOKA! COUDA ATOOK!
SCUSE ME, ATOOK YOU IN CHARGE HERE?
!

ALOONDA ATOOK? ZUG ZUG ?
SORRY BUT WE NEED A MEETING OF MINDS RIGHT NOW AND I DON'T KNOW HOW TO ASK YOUR PERMISSION SO
oh
oh NO
NO!

WHAT WHAT DID YOU DO TO ME ?
TRADED THOUGHTS MEMORIES
YOU YOU STOLE THOSE CHILDREN TO SAVE THEM ?
OF COURSE! WHAT DID YOU THINK -- WE WOULD EAT THEM ?
SEAL THE TRAILS! LET NO ONE ESCAPE!
SO! THE GREAT SACHEM OF VARDAN REEF I GUESS A LITTLE CHILD-SACRIFICE WASN'T WORTH MENTIONING, HUH?
AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE SOOO CUTE !

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The CrossGen Universe created by Mark Alessi & Gina M. Villa

MYSTIC™
Tony Bedard
Aaron Lopresti
Matt Ryan
Wil Quintana
Issue #33
In Stores
February 5th
ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?
Lopresti .02
Ryan
WIL

MysSpellings

Please let us know if you don't want your name and address printed. Mark your e-mails as "okay to print." Letters may be edited for content and length.

MysSpellings:

I have been reading MYSTIC from the very first issue and I have a few comments and questions for you:

First, re: issue #28. I have to disagree with the notion that is voiced by the Clipboard Guy on page 12 and later on page 17 that the rules of magic aren't consistent. Internal consistency is what's important, and handled correctly (as you have done up to now) magic can have consistent rules and also have limits. Both Piers Anthony, in his *Xanth* series, and Terry Pratchet *(Discworld)* have proven that.

I think I've figured out the "color-coding" of each Guild. Am I correct in assuming that the colors of the spells associated with each group are there to help us keep track of which Guild initiates the spell and which Guild Spirit is speaking?

Are we ever going to finish the "tour" of the Guilds? Are you going to explore the Auxiliary Guilds? I would love to see a little of their politics, philosophies and cultures.

What was the accident that orphaned Genevieve and Giselle?

Last, I think it's a shame that Thierry ended up with Genevieve instead of Giselle. I think Giselle needs the grounding in the "real world" that he would give her.

Thank you for your time, patience, and creative imagination.

Michael Boyd
Evansville, IN

Michael, your letter gives me a great opportunity to address some questions that other people might also have, so let's get to it. I think all of us here would agree with your first comment. The problem with Clipboard Guy was that he didn't have the imagination to be able to deal with the free-spirited nature of the Astral Guild's magic, so he didn't understand that it does have limits and is consistent. As with many people who don't understand something, for Clipboard Guy that meant it was wrong and Had To Be Stopped. You're half right about the colors of the Guilds' magics. We did want to differentiate them in some way visually for the readers, but we also wanted to take advantage of our colorists' skills in making an arresting page. As for differentiating the Guild Spirits when they speak, if you check, you'll see that, although their balloons are all the same color (blue) they each contain the Guild symbol that identifies the speaker's Guild. We thought different colors for each balloon would be too distracting, so we went with a more subtle identifier. We will certainly finish visiting all of the Major Guilds. But since the reason for Giselle's "tour" is to win over the Spirits housed within her, she won't be going to the Auxiliary Guilds — at least not in the foreseeable future. The event that killed the elder Villards was a magical battle. Giselle was only 14 at the time, which may account for her previous aversion to all things magical. Thierry's a great guy, but I think Gen is the right person for him now. At this stage of Giselle's life, she really has to concentrate on mastering her abilities and learning to be a grown-up.

❖

Mystic Crew and Gina,

Despite my dubious ties to CrossGen, *(note: the writer is our CFO's brother...But I'm printing his letter in spite of it.)* I've actually purchased every issue of every title (trade paperbacks excluded) and am a Platinum member of Comics on the Web of my own accord. I thoroughly enjoy reading your books, not because of my brother, but because after collecting comics on and off (and on again) for over 14 years, I can honestly say that CrossGen comics are the highest-quality, best-produced comics on the market today, in my humble opinion.

That said, you can imagine my dismay when I actually found an error in one of your books. I've

spotted a few things in the past that I thought were a little questionable, but this is a definite mistake. On page 15 of MYSTIC issue #30 (where Domo starts firing in Jazzrat's) the word balloons for Gen and Giselle are swapped in the middle panel. Gen, in disguise, yells "Gen!" and Giselle responds "Got it!" I'm pretty sure it should be the other way around.

Not sure if any other discriminating readers have pointed this out yet, but I thought I'd bring it to your attention in hopes of receiving the first Official CrossGen "No Award" award (which I'm sure you'll come up with a wildly creative name for to keep those pesky Marvel lawyers at bay).

Thanks, and keep up the great work,
Chris Beattie
cbeattie@cfl.rr.com

Actually, Chris, Gen and 'Elle were speaking in Villard code to confuse their opponent. Oh, okay, I'll come clean. Those pesky balloon tails slipped by us. Are you happy now? Everyone here is just crushed — *crushed*, I tell you — to have made an actual (*shudder*) mistake! Not that we don't appreciate the eagle-eyed nitp...er, attention with which you scrutinize every panel, pal, but you've caused a real morale problem at the studio. *Sigh.* You can pick up that award — henceforth to be known as a "Beattie" — the next time you're in the neighborhood. (Sheesh, Mike, you wanna tell your bro to lay off? Ian hasn't stopped sobbing yet! Next time Chris sends a letter I'm not gonna fix his spelling errors!)

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or via e-mail:
letters@crossgen.com
MYSTIC (in the subject line)

CROSSCURRENTS

by Gina Villa

Well, chums, all good things come to an end...but, frequently, they're replaced with something better. We think that's just what we have in store for you next month, when we revamp the look and content of these pages.

A number of things factored into the decision, but, truth to tell, a lot of it was driven by the fact that, more and more, people seem to prefer to communicate with us via the message boards instead of sending us letters. I don't just mean the write-on-a-piece-of-paper, stamp-the-envelope kind of letters, either; even the e-mail correspondence has been sparse of late. We do have a faithful cadre of letter writers upon whom I can always depend, month in and month out. But I feel if the same people's names appear in the letters columns time after time (let's face it — this has been happening), after a while everybody else will get the feeling that there's some kind of exclusive little club thing going on and we'll inevitably lose the type of lively dialogue that was the hallmark of my favorite letters columns back in the day.

Now, don't get me wrong. The letters columns are not going away permanently. Every two or three months — or whenever I get a good assortment of interesting mail — we'll publish a couple of pages of letters in each of our books. I'll also use this space in *CrossCurrents* to print a single particularly thought-provoking or insightful letter. I never want to deprive our readers of a forum in which to air their views just because they don't have a computer or access to the Internet. While I'll miss our more frequent chats, I look forward to getting a big bunch of stimulating mail from lots of different people. Don't you disappoint me, y'hear?

So, what's going to be filling this space? As I said, my *CrossCurrents* column will be sticking around, emphasizing happenings in the CrossGen Universe arm of the company and it will be joined by a similar column written by Ian Feller, our Code 6 Managing Editor, about goings-on over in that world. Our *Recommended Reads* will continue to be a staple. We'll also be doing things like creator interviews, employee profiles, and spotlights on new products and projects. Who knows, occasionally we might even throw in some fan art again. In short, you'll be getting a lot of cool info about everything CGE-related, all wrapped up in a snazzy visual package.

Watch this space for the great unveiling next month, then tell us how you like it. Uh, not that you have to write a letter, or anything like that...

CROSSGENERATION COMICS, INC. RECOMMENDED GOOD READ!

Recommended R Reads

by CrossGen inker Mike Perkins

As loathe as I am to press upon someone the entire output of one writer, I'll make and exception in this case and point you towards the works of **Mike Carey**. Having had the pleasure of working with the writer in the past on a couple of projects — and being mightily impressed with the plots, settings and characterizations, as well as his whole work ethic — I have no hesitation in leading you towards a whole bunch of comics he produces at this moment. At the top of the pile is *Lucifer*, published by DC/Vertigo. *Lucifer* is an epic story usually presented in short story arcs, although each arc encompasses the whole, and each issue has so far been astounding (in particular the regular single-issue stories which crop up between arcs). The publishers are comprehensively reprinting the *Lucifer* storylines in trade paperback format, so it's never too late to catch up with one of the most original books out there. As well as *Lucifer* I would also recommend Mr. Carey's other recent work, including *Hellblazer*, *The Furies* graphic novel (due at Halloween, although I'm reluctant to recommend it until it comes out and I've read it. Yet, Mr. Carey hasn't put a foot wrong so far...) and the soon-to-be revamped *Firestorm* for the DCU.